

**Department of the Interior
Process for Implementation of
Fish Protection and Habitat Restoration
Actions Proposed or Likely to Use (b)(2) Water**

The Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has identified actions, which are set out in the following chart, that contribute to the CVPIA goal of doubling the natural production of anadromous fish. The actions were developed as part of the Anadromous Fish Restoration Program [CVPIA Section 3406(b)(1)] and address several of the identified population limiting factors including the needs for improved instream flows for adult upstream migration, spawning, egg incubation, rearing, and juvenile outmigration; reductions in flow fluctuations; temperature control; and safe passage of juvenile past points of diversion and through the estuary. The actions were developed with extensive input from fishery experts representing agencies and stakeholders and biologists from throughout the western United States. Many of these fish actions were described in the Appendix A of the November 20, 1997, CVPIA Final Administrative Proposal on the Management of Section 3406(b)(2) Water. Additional actions have been included in this list based upon information developed with public input during the AFRP process. This list will be used to implement Section 3406(b)(2) actions and to ensure that Interior can carry out the Congressional direction to dedicate and manage 800,000 acre-feet of CVP yield for fish, wildlife and habitat restoration and other purposes each year. This list provides a basis for fish actions that will be available to coordinate with and support an Environment Water Account developed through the CALFED process.

The FWS anticipates selecting from the listed actions for the annual management of yield dedicated under (b)(2). Not all actions on the list will be implemented in any given year, but instead the FWS will annually select the appropriate actions for use of the (b)(2) water based on biological needs, hydrologic circumstances, and water availability. The FWS will select appropriate actions for any given year following consultation with the Bureau of Reclamation and the California Department of Water Resources and in cooperation with the California Department of Fish and Game and consistent with the stakeholder coordination process described below.

To assist Interior in implementing the methodology and (b)(2) policy set forth in the final decision, Interior has established a B2 Interagency Team (B2IT). Interior will seek the participation of California Department of Water Resources (DWR) and California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) on the team. With the State's agreement, this interagency team of project operators and project and resource agency biologists will consist of representatives from the following agencies: DWR; DFG; Reclamation; FWS; and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

To assist the B2IT and Interior in developing the annual actions to dedicate and manage the 800,000 acre feet, Interior has established the following stakeholder process. The stakeholder process will be used as an opportunity for the project operators and resource agencies to present and discuss information and receive input on the development of the annual b(2) fishery action plan and how the plan is integrated into the operations forecast.

This will be accomplished through bi-annual workshops with all interested parties.

- A fall (mid-November) workshop will be held to present, discuss and receive input on the annual b(2) fishery action plan and the operations forecast for the coming water year (October -

September).

- A second workshop will be held in mid-winter (January or February) to present, discuss and receive input on updates to the annual b(2) fishery action plan resulting from the fall/winter operations of the project. This will also provide information on the updated operations forecast and resulting water supply allocations.
- Additional information will be made available through the monthly CALFED Operations Group meetings as the annual b(2) fishery plan and operations forecast are adjusted to reflect more current hydrologic and biological data.

The B2IT process will coordinate the development and management of the annual b(2) fishery action plan. The following process has been established and will be updated monthly:

- During the month of September Reclamation will prepare an annual operations forecast representing the 1992 baseline conditions and the conditions under the 1995 Water Quality Control Plan (WQCP).
- Based on the operations forecast using the 1995 WQCP the FWS will consult with biologists from the other federal and state agencies (DWR, DFG, FWS, Reclamation and Service) in preparing an annual b(2) fishery action plan to be presented to the Reclamation and DWR operations staff.
- Reclamation and DWR operations staff will prepare a forecast of project operations for the coming water year that incorporates the annual b(2) fishery action plan. An iterative process between the operations staff and biologists will take place in developing the final operations forecast.
- Weekly coordination of the B2IT will be used in updating the b(2) fishery action plan and monthly operations forecast to reflect current hydrologic and biological data.
- Weekly, or more frequently as needed, coordination will occur between Reclamation and FWS regarding incidental operational changes and b(2) accounting. Reclamation and the FWS will consult with other members of the B2IT as necessary to implement any operational changes.

As measures are implemented and evaluated, reassessment of their relative contribution to the restoration of Central Valley fish populations may result in changes to the actions or additions/deletions to the list. The FWS anticipates that (b)(2) water used for anadromous fish restoration will provide concurrent benefits to other fish and wildlife, will assist in meeting water quality control plan (WQCP) standards, and will help to meet additional Endangered Species Act obligations.

The list is not all inclusive but represents those actions believed at this time to be most important. While the FWS will attempt to prioritize the actions over the long term and implement them in order of priority, it must be recognized that the biological value and water cost, and therefore, the priority, of an action will depend largely on the hydrologic and ecological circumstances at the time of implementation. As actions are implemented, they will be evaluated, and an assessment of their relative contribution to CVPIA goals may result in changes to the actions or additions/deletions to the list.

It must be recognized that (b)(2) will not provide sufficient water to implement all of the actions each year and that the extent to which an action is needed or able to be implemented will depend on the hydrology at the time.